Immigration from the Northern Triangle of Central America: A Comparison of Mexico and the U.S. as Destinations

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Abstract

In spite of major economic slowdown in 2007-2009 and increased immigration and border enforcement in both the United States and Mexico over the last decade, unauthorized migration from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA, i.e., El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) has persisted. We explain the role of economic and political contexts of emigration from each NTCA nation, as well as the immigration policy contexts of reception in the United States and Mexico, and relate this to the socio-demographic profiles of the NTCA population in both countries. We compare immigrant socio-demographic profiles (age, sex and education), migration timing and geographical distribution of migrants from the three countries in Mexico and the United States.

Extended Abstract

Introduction

International migration dynamics originating from, transiting, and returning to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, also known as the Northern Triangle of Central America (henceforth, NTCA) have experienced considerable transformations over the last few years. Emigration out of the three NTCA nations, mostly directed towards the U.S. and traversing through Mexico, has continued at high levels in the recent past, leading to a persistent growth of the NTCA-born population in the U.S., particularly of those in unauthorized statuses. This persistence and growth have taken place despite the fact that recent economic and immigration enforcement developments suggest we should be observing a decline in the unauthorized population (from the NTCA and elsewhere). In particular, unauthorized migration should have decreased during the most recent financial crisis stemming from the U.S. housing bust in 2007 and during its aftermath of relatively slow recovery. Furthermore, this slowdown would be particularly warranted given the ramp-up in immigration enforcement at the U.S. border, from the U.S. interior, and throughout the Mexican territory.
Indeed, over the last decade a growing number of NTCA and Mexican nationals has been deported (or, in modern administrative parlance, “removed”) from the U.S. interior, or apprehended at the U.S. or Mexico borders and “removed” or “returned” (a more simple procedure of removal) to their places of origin. While an adverse economic context and immigration enforcement policies have been associated with lower unauthorized migration from Mexico, immigration from the NTCA appears to be impervious to these trends. Combined with the slowdown of Mexican migration, the persistence of flows from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala has resulted in that, for the first time in recorded history, apprehensions of NTCA nationals at the U.S. border outnumber those of Mexicans.

The migration of highly vulnerable population groups is an important and telling case. Experiencing a considerable surge in 2014, the number of unaccompanied minors from each of the three NTCA nations apprehended in the U.S. grew from 1,000-3,000 per year during fiscal years (FY)2009-FY2011, to 6,000-8,000 in FY2013, and doubled/tripled in FY2014 to levels between 16,000 and 18,000. A similar trend was observed in Mexico where the number of unaccompanied minors born in the NTCA apprehended and returned by Mexican authorities increased from 2,300 in 2000, to 3,300 in 2012; 4,200 in 2014; and to 6,800 just during the first five months of 2015. Less publicized, the number of people apprehended trying to cross to the U.S. as part of a
family unit almost quadrupled in FY2014 relative to FY2013 with figures in the latter year of 14,833 for El Salvador, 12,006 for Guatemala, and 34,495 for Honduras (in contrast, 5,639 Mexican apprehensions were considered part of a family unit). Looking into the motivations of families and unaccompanied minors to risk life and limb in the migrant journey tells us why enforcement appears less effective for migration from the NTCA relative to its recent effect on Mexican adult migration.

In order to understand the Central American response (or lack thereof) to these economic and enforcement conditions, it is necessary to recognize the economic and socio-political contexts in which emigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has taken place historically. Despite having gained prominence in recent years these population movements from the NTCA countries, like most migration flows of this relative magnitude, have been some time in the making. These have been produced not only by exceptional circumstances but also by longstanding structural conditions in sending nations. In this policy brief we summarize the international migration dynamics from each NTCA nation with a deep historical perspective, disentangling their drivers, and raising new questions for the future. We describe Mexico and the U.S. as destination countries and Mexico as transit space for Central American migrants. We wrap up by discussing policy recommendations with regards to both the management of the flows in light of their history and structural underpinnings, and pointing to the need for additional data sources and new research to better understand their drivers and future trends.

**Mexico: a country of emigration and, increasingly, a country of transit, temporary labour, and settlement of NTCA migrants**

With about 12 million Mexicans residing in the U.S. today, Mexico is by far the largest immigrant group in the country, a figure rising from around 500,000 in 1965 (see Figure 2). Beyond propinquity and a 2,000 mile shared border, Mexico-U.S. migration over these five decades has been the result of labor demand in the U.S., political, demographic and socio-economic conditions in Mexico, strong social networks and cultural ties that enable migration, and U.S. immigration policies that shape its size, geography and nature. The legal and temporary nature that characterized the pre-1965 period transformed itself over time. During the last decade, Mexican emigration from Mexico has declined substantially and return migration from the U.S. to Mexico has increased, including a large number of deportees and U.S.-born minors with a Mexican parent. The end result of this reversal in historic trends has been zero net migration from Mexico to the U.S. and a stable, or even decline stock of Mexican-born immigrants in the U.S.
Mexico’s historical position as an emigration country is well known, and the phenomenon of the Mexico-U.S. migration era has been well documented. However, it was not until very recently that the role of Mexico as a country of transit migration, settlement destination for temporary and permanent migrants, as well as return migration, has gained academic and political attention. Next, we review how the legal context of reception in Mexico has evolved in the last three decades in relation to the arrival of NTCA nationals and we provide a basic socio-demographic description of immigrant stocks from these NTCA countries.

The historical legal context of reception of NTCA nationals in Mexico

While Mexico had accommodated the immigration of Jews, Lebanese, Eastern Europeans, Spaniards, and other groups fleeing persecution throughout the twentieth century in diverse ways, it had not established any legal mechanisms to provide refugee status when displaced Nicaraguans arrived in the late 1970s, and would only do so when UNHCR camps were installed within its territory to receive Guatemalans and Salvadorans during the early 1980s. The magnitude of the arrival of Central American migrants to Mexico at the end of the 1970s challenged Mexican asylum policy with the upsurge of Central Americans fleeing political instability. Processing asylum and
refugee claims, which according to Mexican legislation had to be based on an individual rating of persecution, turned unfeasible due to the high volume. In 1980, Mexico created its Commission for Aid to Refugees (COMAR its acronym in Spanish) and even though it was intended to oversee all refugees in the country, due to budget constraints it was limited to the attention of Guatemalan refugees in camps receiving support from UNCHR. Although it is estimated that about 200,000 Guatemalans sought refuge in Mexico between 1981 and 1983, only 46,000 registered officially with the UNHCR). In 1993, COMAR organized the first mass return of Central Americans and, at the same time, the UNHCR, COMAR and the Mexican Office of Migration Affairs (Instituto Nacional de Migración, in Spanish or INM) began a process known as "migration stabilization", which sought to facilitate the integration of refugees who wished to remain in the country. Mexico created a legal framework in 1990 regulating asylum and providing temporary visas for Guatemalans to enter and work in its southern border region. It has been estimated that a total of half a million Salvadorans and 200,000 Guatemalans had left their countries by 1990. However, not all settled in Mexico. According to data from COMAR, more than 4,000 Guatemalan refugees returned to their country by 1989 within a special program of voluntary return and around 43,000 had done so by 1999. Because of Mexico’s immigration restrictive policies, and their urban origins, Salvadorans were more likely than Guatemalans to move further north to large cities in the U.S. or Canada.

With the creation of the INM in 1993, Mexico started defining formal channels to control and manage migration through the development of special programs aiming at the reincorporation of Mexican returnees (Programa Paisano) and deportees (Programa de Repatriación), the provision of basic support to migrants at risk at the Northern and Southern border (Grupo Beta), as well as gathering statistics on arrivals and removals. In response to a rise in transit migration from Central America during the 2000s, and an increase in violence towards migrants and an escalation of human rights violations cases—mainly from organized crime—, in 2011 the Mexican government adopted a new migration law (Ley Nacional de Migración) as well as a refugee and protection law (Ley de Refugiados y Protección Complementaria). The first law aimed to secure the rights of the foreign-born population regardless of their legal status, their intention to settle in the country or transit to the U.S. However, the implementation of the law has been challenging. Even when it has created channels to provide access to public services and concrete rights, such as for example, basic access to health care via the Seguro Popular (see Policy Brief PB05, this series), and facilitates immigrant regularization and granting of permanent
residence for high-skilled immigrants, it provides limited options for Central Americans. Various other Policy Briefs in this CANAMID series provide full details about the issues that have recently arised in Mexico as a new country of immigration, transit and return migration. We here provide a general demographic and historic context.

Mexico as country of destination of Central Americans: A basic demographic profile

A look at the trends in the demographic profiles of Central American migrants in Mexico provides valuable insights on the changing migrant flows to Mexico. Empirically, it is hard to know if the Central American population living in Mexico at any particular point in time is aiming to reside temporarily, permanently, or is just in transit on their way to a northern country. Lack of longitudinal data, or cross-sectional data that allows distinguishing how long NTCA migrants have been in Mexico blurs our understanding of the phenomenon. It is hard to determine how many Central Americans lived in Mexico prior to 2000 because of a lack of nationally representative data publicly available from Mexican Censuses and surveys. Mexican census data show that the NTCA population ‘normally residing’ in the country increased by 50% between 2000 and 2010, going from 33,000 to 50,000. The majority (more than 70 percent) of NTCA nationals in Mexico in 2000 were born in Guatemala, reflecting a migratory tradition and stronger relations and exchanges than with the other countries. Towards the end of the decade, however, the relative presence of Salvadorans and –especially– Hondurans increased, motivated by the economic, political and violent context described above.

Using data from the complete set of individual records from the 2000 Mexican Census and weighted data from the 10% analytic sample of the 2010 Mexican Census (the most updated nationally representative available) we estimate basic demographic characteristics (sex, age, and education) of the NTCA population in Mexico in 2000 and 2010 by time period, country of origin, and place of residence five years prior to the Census. This last dimension allows us to distinguish between recent and earlier arrivals. The Central American population from these three countries living in Mexico is predominantly female, and the Salvadoran population is on average older than the other NTCA nationals. In both time periods, the Guatemalan population has had, on average, the lowest educational attainment contrasting the Salvadoran population with the highest average years of schooling. This is consistent with the characteristics of outmigrants, as well as average differences in the countries of origin. However, distinguishing between recent and earliest arrivals, and place of residence in 1995 and 2005 we note several differences by country. First, we observe that the Salvadoran population of recent arrivals is predominantly male and younger than earliest
arrivals, and those who had previous migration experience in the U.S. Second, Salvadorans constituted the oldest group in 2010, and Guatemalans showed the highest proportion of immigrants who were already residing in Mexico prior to 2005, consistent with the idea that Guatemalans have a longer tradition of settlement in the country. Third, Guatemalans (except for those with previous residence in the U.S.) are highly concentrated in Chiapas, while Salvadorans and Hondurans show a wider distribution in other states. Fourth, the change in the geographic distribution along with the stark decline in the share of the population already living in Mexico in 2005, reflect the fact that Salvadoran and Honduran populations include a larger share of recent immigrants, who arrived in the 2005-2010 period both from the U.S. and their origin countries. The population from the NTCA with residence in the U.S. five years prior to the Census increased more than threefold between 2000 and 2010 (3.1, 4, and 4.6 times respectively for Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans). This last fact is consistent with the knowledge that many Central Americans aim to return to the U.S.

Mexico as country of transit migration for Central Americans: Recent trends

Estimates on the flow of unauthorized Central Americans through Mexico show an increasing trend since the mid-1990s until 2005, when it reached its highest point with an annual volume estimated between 390,000 and 430,000 migrants. Between the years 2006 and 2009, the flow suffered a drastic slowdown of about 70%, it then stabilized in 2010-2011, after which the flows increased once again reaching 183,000 migrants in 2012\textsuperscript{xi}. Since 2012, data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Mexico’s INM, show a sustained increase of apprehensions from NTCA countries, with Honduras at the top, followed by Guatemala and El Salvador. Mexican data show that Mexican authorities apprehended 81,000 NTCA nationals in 2012, and this number increased to reach 118,000 in 2014 (23,000 nationals from El Salvador, 47,800 Guatemalans, and 47,500 Hondurans). Without considering data on immigration enforcement from the interior, but apprehensions in U.S. southwest border, it is possible to note how transit migration through Mexico increased. CBP apprehended in the southwest border in FY 2013 31,000 nationals from El Salvador, 29,000 from Guatemala, and 53,000 Hondurans. In FY 2014 this increased to 66,600, 81,000, and 91,000 for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, respectively. One of the main differences before and after 2009 is the increase in the proportion of unaccompanied minors who are detained by Mexico and the U.S. Almost 21,000 unaccompanied NTCA children where apprehended at the U.S. Southwest border in FY2013, and this more than duplicated to 51,000 in FY2014. Salvadoran and Honduran minors mostly drive this increase. In
Mexico, while the share of minors travelling alone and unaccompanied was similar in 2009, two thirds of the minors detained in 2012 were traveling unaccompanied through the country. This decreased later such that during the first semester of 2015, with fifty three percent of the 16,000 NTCA minors who where detained in Mexico travelling unaccompanied. From January to June 2015, 8,500 NTCA unaccompanied minors were detained by Mexican authorities.

The U.S. as a country of destination of Central American migrants

Historical context of reception: U.S. Immigration Policy

Many scholars have pointed out how large unauthorized inflows from the NTCA, Mexico, and elsewhere are the product of deeply-entrenched historical processes in which conditions in sending areas described above, labor demand in the U.S., family reunification needs, and immigration policy itself engendered unauthorized movement. In particular, despite being overall ineffective as a strategy to stop the flows \textit{per se}, U.S. immigration enforcement policies and practices have had a very deep effect on how unauthorized migration takes place (who leaves, under which conditions, and where they settle). This is particularly true for migration from the three NTCA countries.

Major reforms to U.S. immigration law between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s restricted legal flows from Latin America by establishing a preference system heavily favoring family reunification and setting limits on immigration from nations of the Western Hemisphere for the first time in history. Importantly, the new system offered virtually no legal permanent migration options to “unskilled” laborers, at least those without family ties to U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents – which, in 1965, only few NTCA nationals or even Mexicans had, as implied in the 1960 estimates shown in Figure 2. While legally closing the door to unskilled migrants, the law did not change the structural conditions in which prior international flows of labor –including those from Mexico and NTCA nations such as Honduras– had emerged: at the end of the Bracero Program, employers continued to employ immigrant labor, except now irregularly. From the point of view of employers, these restrictions in immigration did not affect things much given that – since at least the mid-1950s– immigration law explicitly allowed for the hiring of unauthorized migrants (and did so until 1986). In this environment, unauthorized labor migration –especially from Mexico and, eventually and to a lesser extent, from the NTCA– increased and, in a way, “flourished”.
Legal refuge and asylum options also were severely limited for most NTCA nationals despite the fact that they were leaving conflict-ridden areas in the 1970s and 1980s. Overall, the U.S. government effectively did not consider the cases of the vast majority of the thousands of Guatemalans and Salvadorans as worthy of asylum (while they did so for Nicaraguans), for instance granting it to only 2-3% of applicants from these two nations throughout most of the 1980s.\textsuperscript{xv} While many Salvadorans and Guatemalans would eventually obtain legal permanent residency via asylum, this only took place in the 1990s—more than a decade later the arrival of most migrants—after major social mobilization and legal battles by immigrants and allies, who reached out-of-court settlements and helped pass bills to give those previously rejected new opportunities to obtain asylum.\textsuperscript{xvi}

This included the creation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a mechanism that provides provisional but renewable relief from deportation, also granting work authorization to people from countries affected by political strife or natural disasters. TPS, created by Congress in 1990 first offered protection to Salvadorans—but not Guatemalans—from removal and has ever since covered a range of national origins and situations, including Salvadorans for a second time in 2001 in the context of the devastating earthquakes that deeply affected the country that year, a status still current today for those present in the U.S. around 2001 thanks to several renewals. Eventually, both Salvadorans and Guatemalans—whose asylum pleas had been seemingly all too easily thrown out in the 1980s—were allowed to re-apply for asylum throughout the mid-late 1990s thanks to the settlement of the American Baptist Churches (ABC) v. Thornburg court case, or via the provisions of the Nicaraguan and Central American Adjustment Act (NACARA), passed by Congress in 1997.\textsuperscript{xvii}

A basic demographic outlook of Central Americans in the U.S. (1980-2012)

There is a large number of Mexican and NTCA nationals in the U.S. without authorization to live or work in the U.S. The latest estimates put these numbers at 5.8 million Mexicans in 2012, 675,000 Salvadorans, 525,000 Guatemalans, and 350,000 Honduras (see Figure 1).\textsuperscript{ xviii} As also shown in Figure 1, while the population of unauthorized migrants from these nations was already substantial in 1990 (40,000 Hondurans, 120,000 Guatemalans, 300,000 Salvadorans, and 2 million Mexicans), they have experienced considerable growth over the last two and a half decades, especially for Hondurans, for whom these figures increased almost nine fold. For Guatemalans, these numbers quadrupled while they more than doubled for Salvadorans during that period.
Finally, while they almost tripled for Mexicans, this growth took place before 2007, after which the stock of unauthorized Mexicans seem to have stabilized.

As described before, migrants from Guatemala and El Salvador started emigrating to the U.S. in somewhat larger numbers when their respective national civil conflicts broke out in the 1970’s and 1980’s, severely affecting lives and livelihoods in many communities. The NTCA migrant population in 1980 was disproportionately feminized (as in the case of Mexico), young, and well-educated. In the case of El Salvador and Guatemala, it was highly concentrated in California (73% and 65% of recent arrivals from El Salvador and Guatemala lived in this state, respectively).

Because these movements took place after the 1965 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act and due to their relative low levels of human and social capital, many people from the NTCA seeking to escape violence did not have access to legal migration options related to either labor or family reunification. Some arriving irregularly up to the early 1980s would be able to regularize their status using two legalization programs contained in the Immigration Control and Reform Act (IRCA) of 1986. However, because these programs required continuous presence in the country since 1982\(^{xx}\), this helped a minority of Salvadorans and Guatemalans that would be displaced by the conflict. It is estimated that 136,000 Salvadorans and 50,000 Guatemalans legalized through IRCA.\(^{xx}\) This represents around a fifth of the unauthorized population from these nations in 1990 (see Figure 1). With much larger inflows the incoming population from the region became less feminized after IRCA than in 1980 while it remained quite youthful. This suggests large movements of men and minors post-1986. On average, people arriving in the late 1980s also had slightly lower levels of schooling than those arriving in the late 1970s. As these populations arrived, Salvadorans in particular settled in slightly more diversified destinations than the traditional Californian stronghold of NTCA nationals), expanding their reach to Texas, and the Washington D.C. area. Eventually, NTCA migrants would also begin settling in the Southeast in larger numbers.

Irregularity and exclusion among at-risk Central American youth

Although court and policy battles solved the legal situation of many NTCA nationals in the 1990s, living in tenuous and grey legal statuses, such as TPS, for so many years has left a deep imprint in migrants’ lives,\(^{xvi}\) and helped make the transition into their new lives in the United States particularly difficult. Adapting to a new setting and country is rarely easy for migrants, especially for those displaced. Uprooting means that one does not necessarily always have the
resources to migrate or navigate the destination's terrain (e.g., the contacts to find affordable housing, jobs, to understand the schooling system). Because of the disruptive nature of displacement, destination States generally provide refugees and asylees with financial aid and other forms of support. Yet, because the U.S. government did not deem that most Salvadorans and Guatemalans had valid claims to asylum for several years after their arrival, their adaptation came even more uneasy than it had for other migrants and refugees. They struggled to find good jobs and housing even more than other groups who were also settling in Los Angeles because they lacked the social capital that even relatively poor Mexican peasants moving in oftentimes had.

The harsh reality of a new setting was perhaps most striking for immigrant children. While moving into the safer environment of a developed nation was most certainly welcome for many, conditions in many of the neighborhoods and schools where NTCA immigrants settled in (e.g., in cities like Los Angeles) were not fully safe. Like many other at-risk youth across the world, immigrant kids from the NTCA joined gangs such as 18th Street, and formed their own – including MS-13 – to protect themselves, socialize, and find a sense of belonging.

Deportation of Central Americans and the dangers of circularity in immigration policy

When U.S. interior immigration enforcement toughened in the late 1990s, hundreds of thousands of both unauthorized migrants and permanent residents have been deported to Mexico and the NTCA: just between FY2012 and FY2014, more than 100,000 Hondurans, 67,000 Salvadorans, 141,000 Guatemalans, and 725,000 Mexicans were formally removed from the U.S., with around a third coming from the U.S. interior and thus representing the most important component of deportations people who had been living in the country for some time. Because many deportees have been uprooted from their families and established lives, their adaptation to their countries of birth has oftentimes been quite difficult, especially for young people. At the population level, the relatively massive influx of deportees and related returnees can be challenging for labor and housing markets and for educational systems.

Changes in U.S. immigration law in 1996 lowered the bar of deportability for legal permanent residents with prior convictions (a change that applied retroactively and without the clear knowledge of many of these families and individuals), sending thousands of unauthorized and otherwise legal immigrants back to Central America, including many active and former gang
members. In addition to the deportation figures discussed before, the demographic effects of deportation on the population of NTCA-born long-term residents in the United States is apparent. In both 2000 and 2008-2012, these populations have become somewhat older, likely due to the natural aging of a group increasingly composed by even more experienced migrants, but also reinforced by the deportation of many minors and young people in particular. For instance, the percentage of Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran long-term migrants (i.e., with more than 5 years in the U.S.) who were younger than 20 years-old decreased noticeably from 10.5%, 14.1%, and 12.7% in 1980, respectively, to 6.6%, 9.2%, and 8.9% in 2000. By 2008-2012, these figures stand at a paltry 3.9%, 7.3%, and 6.0%, a change too quick and large to be only driven by aging. In contrast, note that recent arrivals were still heavily composed of young people in 2000, with a quarter to a third of recent migrants being younger than 20 years-old, with more recent waves of immigrants (e.g., those captured in the 2008-2012, arriving around 2003-2007) also including a nontrivial component of adults in middle ages (i.e., 45-64 years of age), and having a slightly higher schooling levels among Salvadorans.

The mounting violence has now permeated all three NTCA nations enough to be –once again, in a different flavor– a likely major driver of emigration (i.e., now including Honduras too). Indeed, experts point to violence as an important driver of migration out of Central America, not only in the distant past of civil war, but in more recent years of gang- and – in parts of Honduras and Guatemala– drug-related violence. In particular, the link between violence and displacement seems to be clear enough for those most at risk of getting caught up in it: according to a recent UNCHR report, many adolescents and children have fled their home communities and try to make it to the U.S. on account of this and other forms of violence. While migration of unaccompanied minors from Central America is by no means a new phenomenon, the almost uninterrupted rise in violence described before, could indeed help explain the recent surge of these flows from the NTCA.

**NTCA Migration in Mexico and the U.S. in comparison: A motivation for further analysis**

Overall, the migrant populations from the three NTCA countries shows some basic differences in both countries. First, the rate of growth of the NTCA population in Mexico grew at a much higher rate than in the U.S. (see Figure 3). Second, the immigrant population in Mexico from NTCA shows a greater feminization trend. Honduras was the most feminized country in Mexico and the U.S. in
2000; however in both countries the proportion of women decreased ten years later (see Figure 4). Third, the age structures of the immigrant population of the three NTCA countries in Mexico and US in 2000 (Figure 2) and 2010 (Figure 6) shows that the populations in the U.S. are younger than their Mexican counterparts. This paper will focus on explaining the differences noted above in relation to the historical context described before. We will use multivariate statistical analysis to evaluate the extent to which these age and sex differences relate to changes in the demographic profiles of the recent immigrant flows and the different growth rate of these populations. Thus, we aim to shed light on how historical contexts of migration shape the demographic outlook of these populations in two different contexts of reception.

![Figure 3. Rate of growth (2000-2010) of NTCA population in Mexico and US](image)

![Figure 4. Greater feminization in Mexico](image)
Figure 5
Age Structure of Immigrants from NTCA countries in Mexico and US in 2000

Figure 6 Age Structure of Immigrants from NTCA countries in Mexico and US in 2010
Notes and references


4 Despite this large slowdown, the numbers of Mexicans emigrating to the U.S. remain at nontrivial levels, with an approximate fifth of a million migrating northward every year. However, this number has been more than offset by return migration to Mexico, including a large number of deportees who are slightly less likely to attempt reentry than in the recent past (but still at relatively high levels of intent). See Passel, J. S., D’Vera Cohn, G. B. A., & Gonzalez-Barrera, A. (2012). Net migration from Mexico falls to zero--and perhaps less. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/. Last accessed on August 24, 2015.


7 Conditions in destinations as well as transit nations may also have an effect on migration dynamics (in either their magnitude, or in their “selectivity.”) However, their role in shaping the magnitude of flows more deeply could be muddled by different factors. See, for instance, Massey, D. S., & Riosmena, F. (2010). Undocumented migration from Latin America in an era of rising US


Individuals living in Mexico in a given census year (e.g. 2000/2010) are asked about their place of residence five years ago (i.e. 1995/2005). Unfortunately, there is no information of the year of arrival to Mexico, or departure from their country of origin.

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Massey & Riosmena (2010).


Wasem (1997). Asylum success rates were a little higher for Salvadorans than for Guatemalans.


Another program allowed for the legalization of farm workers working on specific commodities in the U.S. Southwest in 1982-1985. While some NTCA nationals were able to use this program, the vast majority of the almost 1.3 million recipients (82%) were Mexican. See Martin, P. L. (1994). Good intentions gone awry: IRCA and US agriculture. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 44-57.


For a more nuanced description of the problems related to their adaptation, see Menjívar (2000).


Note, however, that violence may not not drive people internationally in every situation, but is related to broader structural conditions. See Alvarado, S. E., & Massey, D. S. (2010). Search of peace: Structural adjustment, violence, and international migration. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 630(1), 137-161.


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